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background notes

Belgium

United States Department of State
Bureau of Public Affairs

November 1985

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Official Name: Kingdom of Belgium

PROFILE

People

Nationality: *Noun and adjective*—Belgian(s). **Population** (1982 est.): 9.9 million. **Annual growth rate:** 0.25%. **Linguistic groups:** Dutch 57%, French 33%, legally bilingual (Brussels) 10%, German 0.7%. **Religion:** Roman Catholic 75%. **Education:** *Years compulsory*—to age 16. *Literacy*—98%. **Health:** *Infant mortality rate* (1985)—10/1,000. *Life expectancy* (1985)—73.6 yrs. **Work force** (4 million): *Agriculture*—3%. *Industry and commerce*—33%. *Services and transportation*—36%. *Public service*—21%. *Unemployment*—14%.

Geography

Area: 30,540 sq. km. (11,800 sq. mi.); about the size of Maryland. **Cities:** *Capital*—Brussels (pop. 1 million). *Other cities*—Antwerp (463,000), Ghent (234,000), Liege (211,000). **Terrain:** Varies from coastal plains in northwest, through gently rolling countryside in the center, to the Ardennes Mountains in the southeast. **Climate:** Cool, temperate, and rainy, without extreme temperature.

Government

Type: Parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarch. **Independence:** 1830. **Constitution:** 1980 (revised).

Branches: *Executive*—king (chief of state), prime minister (head of government), Council of Ministers (Cabinet). *Legislative*—bicameral Parliament (Senate and House of Representatives); Flemish Community Assembly with the Flemish Executive for Regional and Cultural Affairs; Walloon Regional Assembly and Executive for Walloon; Regional Affairs; and Francophone Community Assembly and Executive for Francophone Cultural Affairs. *Judicial*—Court of Cassation.

Subdivisions: 3 regions (Flanders, Wallonia, Brussels); 2 cultural communities (Francophone, Flemish, plus a special status for the German-speaking community); 9 provinces; 589 communes.

Political parties: Flemish Social Christians (CVP), Francophone Social Christians (PSC), Francophone Socialists (PS), Flemish Socialists (SP), Flemish Liberal (PVV), Francophone Liberal (PRL), Volksunie (VU), Francophone Democratic Front (FDF), Flemish Ecologists (AGALEV), Walloon Rally (RW), Francophone Ecologists (ECOLO), Communist Party (PCB). **Suffrage:** Universal over 18; compulsory voting.

Central government budget (1984): Approx. $31.2 billion.

Flag: Three vertical bands—black, yellow, and red from left to right.

Economy

GNP (1984): $77 billion. **Annual growth rate** (1984): 2%. **Per capita income** (1984): $7,803. **Avg. inflation rate** (last 3 yrs.): 6%.

Natural resource: Coal.

Agriculture (2.3% of GNP): *Products*—livestock, poultry, grain, sugarbeets, flax, tobacco, potatoes, other vegetables, fruits.

Industry (31% of GNP): *Types*—machinery, iron and steel, coal, textiles, chemicals, glass.

Trade (1984): *Exports*—$46 billion: machinery (22%), chemicals (12%), food and livestock (10%), iron and steel (9%). *Imports*—$46.9 billion: machinery (22%), fuels (20%), chemical products (8%), food (13%). *Major trade partners*—FRG, France, the Netherlands.

Official exchange rate (Dec. 1984): About 57.8 Belgian francs = US$1.

Economic aid budgeted: $497 million.

Membership in International Organizations

UN, NATO, European Communities (EC), Belgium-Luxembourg Economic Union (BLEU), Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), INTELSAT, Council of Europe, Western European Union, Belgium-Netherlands-Luxembourg Economic Union (Benelux).

S1.123:

NORTH SEA
NETHERLANDS
Turnhout
Zeebrugge
Ostende
Brugge
Sint-Niklaas
Antwerp
Lier
Dunkerque
Torhout
Gent
Scheldt
Mechelen
FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY
Roeselare
Lys
Aalst
Ieper
Kortrijk
Leuven
Hasselt
BRUSSELS
Halle
Tournai
Liege
Verviers
Meuse
Huy
Namur
Malmédy
Mons
La Louvière
Charleroi
Sambre
FRANCE
Dinant
Marche-en-Famenne
Bastogne
Arlon
FRANCE
BELGIUM
International boundary
National capital
Railroad
Road
International airport
0 25 50 Kilometers
0 25 50 Miles

GEOGRAPHY

Belgium is one of the smallest countries in Europe, covering an area of 30,540 square kilometers (11,800 sq. mi.); the distance between its two farthest points is only 280 kilometers (175 mi.). The country can be described roughly as a wedge, with a 488-kilometer (280-mi.) frontier with the Netherlands at the northern edge and a 608-kilometer (380-mi.) frontier with France on its southern side. The western edge is a 64-kilometer (40-mi.) North Sea coastline. On the east is a 160-kilometer (100-mi.) border with the Federal Republic of Germany and, to the south, about the same with Luxembourg.

The north and west constitute a great fertile maritime plain, scarcely above sea level. South of Brussels, central Belgium is a rolling country of pleasant hills and valleys, rising gradually eastward. Still further south and to the east, the hills give way to the mountainous Ardennes Forest, the river valleys of which have been invasion routes in wars dating back to the Middle Ages but which are now popular tourist and vacation spots.

The climate is cool, temperate, and rainy; summer temperatures average 16°C (60°F). Temperatures rarely reach −12°C or 32°C (10°F or 90°F).

PEOPLE

At the crossroads of Europe, Belgium has witnessed a constant ebb and flow of different peoples and cultures over its long history. It comprises cultural elements of Celtic, Roman, German, French, Dutch, Spanish, and Austrian origins.

Today, Belgians are divided linguistically into Dutch speakers, called Flemings, and French speakers, called Walloons, with a nominally bilingual population in Brussels. About 65,000 German speakers live in the east. About 903,000 foreigners reside in Belgium as well. Population density is the second highest in Europe, after the Netherlands.

Belgium's artistic tradition is founded in the works of its masters—Rubens, Breughel, Bosch, Memling, Van Eyck—whose works are displayed in museums and churches throughout the country. The cities of Brussels, Antwerp, Bruges, Ghent, Liege, and Louvain are famous for their architecture as well as their art. Belgium's modern artists, such as Ensor, Permeke, the surrealists Magritte and Delvaux, and many others are outstanding representatives of 20th century art.

Belgium is an international center for the performing arts. Its renowned Palais des Beaux Arts in Brussels offers a wide range of dance and music programs each season. The Theatre Royal de la Monnaie is home of the noted "20th Century Ballet" troupe of Maurice Bejart. The Festival of Flanders and the Festival of Wallonia are world famous, as is Belgium's highly respected international music competition, the Queen Elizabeth Contest. Founded in 1951, it offers financial support and encouragement to talented young musicians and composers. Every 2 years, the Brussels-based Europalia organization presents a different European country in a series of prestigious cultural events including art forms and other aspects of traditional society (Greece was featured in 1982).

The Belgian daily and weekly press is predominantly party oriented. Radio and television are state monopolies, but Belgium's geographic location allows cable television subscribers to receive up to 15 television stations in France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

HISTORY

Belgium has existed essentially in its present form since 1830, when an uprising led to independence from the Netherlands. The country's name goes back to a Celtic tribe, the Belgae, whom Julius Caesar described in his commentaries as the most courageous tribe in all of Gaul. The Belgae were overwhelmed, however, by Caesar's legions around 50 B.C., and for 300 years the area was a Roman province. Some scholars believe that the southern part of Belgium was the northernmost area of true Roman cultural penetration, beyond which Latin never really took hold. The proto-Dutch language, spoken by the Frankish invaders, who swept through the Roman Empire in the 4th century A.D., took hold north of that line and some say is at the root of the linguistic division of modern Belgium.

Throughout most of the Middle Ages, Belgian history was characterized by quasi-independent trading and manufacturing towns that rose out of the rubble left by the Viking ravages of northern Europe—Ghent, Bruges, Antwerp, Liege, and others. After centuries of war and many accidents of dynastic succession, the area that had come to be known as the Lowlands—comprising the approximate modern territories of Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg—came into the possession of Charles V, the Holy Roman Emperor in the early 1500s.

The arrival of Protestantism polarized the Lowlands into two hostile camps. In the religious wars, the split became geographic and political as Protestants succeeded in establishing the United Provinces of the Netherlands in the north. The remaining Catholic territory is approximately equivalent to modern Belgium.

After two centuries of Spanish rule, the country passed as a consequence of the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) to the Austrian Hapsburgs. It was annexed to France by Napoleon in 1794. After his defeat in 1815, Belgium was awarded to the Netherlands. However, the inhabitants, after 15 years of chafing against Dutch administrative and economic reforms, revolted and declared the independent state of Belgium in 1830. A German prince was found to take the newly established throne with its progressive, almost republican constitution, and the state was successfully launched with Leopold I as the first king of the Belgians.

For 84 years, Belgium remained neutral in an era of intra-European wars until German troops overran the country during their attack on France in 1914. King Albert, the constitutional commander-in-chief of the armed forces, rallied what remained of his troops and, after linking up with the French Army, was able to hang onto a tiny corner of Flemish Belgium near the sea throughout the war. Some of the fiercest battles of World War I were found on these "Flanders' fields."

The interwar years saw an unprecedented blooming of Flemish culture in northern Belgium and a sharpening of the ethnic rivalry between the northern Dutch-speaking Flemings and the southern French-speaking Walloons. Partly as a result, in 1936 Belgium reverted to its former policy of neutrality, trying not to provide Nazi Germany with an excuse to invade. As in 1914, this failed, and Belgium was occupied by the Germans in 1940. While the cabinet and other political leaders established a government-in-exile in London, the King remained in Belgium for the entire war. The King's behavior under the German occupation was sufficiently controversial to force him, in 1951, to abdicate in favor of his son, the present King Baudouin.

Seats in Parliament

October 1985 Election

Party	*Senate*	*Chamber*
CVP	40	49
PSC	16	20
PS	31	35
SP	21	32
PVV	23	22
PRL	20	24
VU	17	16
RW/FDF	6	4
PCB	1	0
Ecologists	5	9
Other	1	4

GOVERNMENT

Belgium is a parliamentary democracy under a constitutional monarch. Although the king (chief of state) is technically the source of all executive authority, the Council of Ministers (Cabinet) actually makes all governmental decisions. The Council of Ministers, led by the prime minister (head of government), holds office as long as it retains the confidence of the Parliament. Parliamentary elections are held at least every 4 years. There is universal suffrage, with obligatory voting and a complicated system of proportional representation.

The bicameral Parliament consists of the Senate and the House of Representatives. Of the 181 senators, 50 are elected by provincial councils, 25 by fellow senators, and the remainder (106) by direct vote. Prince Albert, heir to the throne, is also a member of the Senate. Members of the House of Representatives (212), traditionally the dominant body, are all directly elected.

In 1970 and 1980, the constitution was amended to provide for creation of community and regional assemblies and executive boards. These assemblies are composed of the members of the House of Representatives and of the directly elected senators from each regional cultural entity. The Flemish Community Executive Board is composed of 9 ministers and headed by Gaston Geens (CVP). The Walloon Regional Executive Board is composed of 6 ministers and headed by Jean-Maurice Dehousse (PS). The Francophone Community Executive Board is composed of 3 ministers and headed by Phillippe Moureaux (PS). These boards are responsible only to their respective regional or community assemblies.

The Belgian judiciary is modeled on the French system. The highest court is the Court of Cassation, the chief justice of which is appointed by the king. The courts do not pass on the constitutionality of legislation, but advisory opinions on the major legislation are rendered by the Council of State, a special legal group.

Principal Government Officials

Chief of State—King Baudouin I
Prime Minister—Wilfried Martens (CVP)
Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Justice—Jean Gol (PRL)
Vice Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Foreign Trade—Willy DeClercq (PVV)
Vice Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior and Public Service—Charles-Ferdinand Nothomb (PSC)

Other Ministers

Foreign Relations—Leo Tindemans (CVP)
Economic Affairs—Mark Eyskens (CVP)
Defense—Alfred Vreven (PVV)

Ambassador to the United States—Herman Dehennin
Ambassador to the United Nations—Ms. Edmonde Dever

POLITICAL CONDITIONS

The most significant, long-term factor in Belgian politics is the division of the Belgian people into two major language groups—Dutch-speakers and French-speakers. All major institutions are divided by language. Regional and linguistic rivalries and needs must be taken into account in all important national decisions.

In the short term, the most urgent political problem the Cabinet faces is implementing economic austerity measures while maintaining Belgium's record of labor-management tranquillity.

The most important medium-term political issue is deciding how much significant power should be transferred from the central government to the regions, as called for in the amended constitution of 1980. Although political agreement existed for the regionalization of Flemish and Walloon affairs, there remains considerable controversy over the future status of nominally bilingual Brussels. In the interests of preserving harmony, the coalition has decided to postpone further discussion of the contentious issue of the status of Brussels for several more years.

Political Parties

Belgium has the traditional range of political parties normally found in a European democracy, from communist through socialist and social-Christian to conservative (called liberal in Belgium). In Belgium, however, the three parties that represent the main ideological tendencies (socialist, social-Christian, liberal) have split along linguistic lines into entirely separate parties—Flemish socialists and Francophone socialists, for example. Several strictly linguistic parties also exist, as do two small but dynamic political movements of ecologists.

Traditionally, the Roman Catholic Church was the basis for the Social Christian parties (known as the CVP in Flanders and the PSC in Wallonia). In recent years, the Social Christians generally have promoted broad principles of social unity without overt reference to ecclesiastical ties. The two parties draw support for their moderate policies from all social classes, including members of the Catholic Trade Union Federation (CSC/ACV), Belgium's largest labor organization.

Although faithful to the rhetoric of traditional Marxist principles, the socialist parties in Belgium (the PS in Wallonia and the SP in Flanders) are pragmatic and moderate on most issues. Their followers have concentrated on social welfare and industrial democracy within the framework of Belgium's free enterprise economy. The parties are closely associated with the Belgian Federation of Labor (FGTB/ABVV), the country's second largest trade union organization.

The liberal parties (the PRL in Wallonia and the PVV in Flanders) promote free enterprise, individualism, and small business. Liberals favor reducing government spending and regulations and believe that the state should encourage private initiative. The liberals advocate moderate, gradual social reform and appeal mainly to the middle class, particularly small businesses, professionals, and shopkeepers.

The Volksunie (VU), a Flemish nationalist party, favors the transformation of Belgium into a federal state with autonomous Flemish and Walloon regions. The counterpart of the Volksunie in Wallonia is known as the Rassemblement Wallon (RW), which advocates an autonomous Walloon region. Related to the RW is the Democratic Front of Francophones (FDF), which defends the interests of the francophone majority in metropolitan Brussels.

The tiny communist party (PCB) attempts to steer a middle course between Moscow and the Eurocommunists but is not a significant political force on the national level.

In 1979 and 1980, three different Cabinets were needed to succeed in amending the constitution and to pass the 1980 Devolution Acts. At that moment, ethnic tensions eased somewhat while economic problems emerged, creating growing divisions between Social Christians and socialists in the Cabinet. In 1981, Prime Minister Martens had to resign because he failed to obtain sufficient support from the socialists or from within his own party for a package of austerity measures. Mark Eyskens, also CVP, took over as prime minister with an otherwise essentially unchanged Social Christian-socialist coalition. Eyskens also could not close the widening gap between Social Christians and socialists, and later in 1981, the inevitable clash over the survival of the Walloon steel industry brought down the Eyskens cabinet. In the ensuing general elections of November 1981, the two Social Christian parties suffered historic defeats.

However, the CVP remained the country's largest party and had no great trouble convincing the PSC and the two liberal parties to form a coalition which became the Martens V government. In its first years in office, the Martens V government concentrated on improving the competitive position of the Belgian economy and the situation of Belgian public finances. To be able to take rapid action, the Cabinet obtained "special powers" from Parliament. However, in 1983, there was a reemergence of ethnic tension over the Walloon steel industry problem and the question of transferring responsibility for the five "national" economic sectors—steel, coal, shipbuilding, glass, and textile—to the regional governments.

In October 1985, Prime Minister Martens' center-right coalition was given an enhanced mandate in parliamentary elections. Martens was expected to reform his government and continue to pursue policies of economic austerity and fiscal responsibility.

DEFENSE

As a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Belgium participates in the collective security efforts of the alliance, and its armed forces are included in NATO's integrated military structure. Belgium is host not only to NATO Headquarters, in Brussels, but also to the Supreme Headquarters, Allied Power Group (SHAPE), located near the southern town of Mons. As part of its commitment to NATO, Belgium has a corps headquarters, a division headquarters, and two brigades, with supporting elements, permanently stationed in the Federal Republic of Germany. In March 1985, Belgium reaffirmed its commitment to the alliance by agreeing to begin deployment of cruise missiles on Belgian soil.

According to the official yearbook on the public sector, career military personnel in the army, navy, and air force numbered 63,560 in 1980. In addition, for the same year, Parliament authorized the call-up of 51,000 conscripts for a period of 8-10 months of compulsory military service. Belgium's national defense budget for 1983 is projected at about $1.8 billion, representing 5.8% of the proposed central government budget for 1983.

ECONOMY

Belgium is a densely populated, highly industrialized country in the middle of one of the world's foremost industrial regions. It lies within 160 kilometers (100 mi.) of London, Paris, the Ruhr Valley, and most of the Netherlands.

Traditionally, Belgium has thrived on trade advantages derived from its highly skilled and productive work force. As a result, it is one of the most open economies in the world, importing raw materials and components to which it adds value and exporting about 57% of its gross national product (GNP) each year. In recent years, foreign demand for Belgium's traditional products has declined, and Belgium has entered the 1980s facing a difficult period of structural adjustment.

Belgium's modern industrial era began in the early 19th century with the development of a steel industry in the south, which spurred the industrial revolution on the European Continent. By the turn of the century, Belgium had been divided *de facto* into a heavily industrialized southern region populated by French-speaking factory workers and an agricultural northern region of Dutch-speaking small farmers. Gradually, however, new industries began to take hold in Flanders. After World War II, Flemish light manufacturing and chemical industries developed rapidly. By the mid-1970s, the economic center had shifted northward, leaving Wallonia with an aging steel industry, while world competition had become increasingly stiff.

Following years of deteriorating economic performance and neglected structural reform, the 1980–82 recession shook Belgium to the core. Unemployment mounted, and government revenues plummeted, while "countercyclical" expenses increased. Foreign borrowing, first introduced as an aberration in 1979, mushroomed as the country

Travel Notes

Climate and clothing: Clothing and shoe needs in Belgium are about the same as for the Pacific Northwest. Raincoat, umbrella, and low-heeled, thick-soled walking shoes are necessary. Winters generally are less severe than in the US, with little snow.

Health: Belgium requires that at least one pharmacy be open in a given neighborhood at all times. The address of that pharmacy is posted on the door of all pharmacies in the neighborhood, and a list of open pharmacies is also published in newspapers. Public health standards are on a par with those in the US. Brussels has a modern sewerage and refuse disposal system and water purification facilities. Tapwater is potable.

Telecommunications: Telephone and telegraph services, domestic and international, are efficient. Direct-dial service between Brussels, the US, and most European capitals is available. Rates for local telephone service are significantly higher than in most US cities.

Transportation: Subways, streetcars, and buses provide good local transportation. Trains are fast and frequent. Roads are excellent. Limited access highways link most major cities in Belgium and provide rapid access to nearby centers such as Paris, Amsterdam, and the German Ruhr. Secondary roads are adequate. All automobiles driven in Belgium must be covered by unlimited third-party liability insurance against personal or property damage; this insurance must be issued by a company licensed to do business in Belgium.

Tourist attractions: Cities such as Bruges, Ghent, Liege, Antwerp, Louvain, and Brussels have their roots deep in the Middle Ages, and portions of these cities' centers still look much as they did centuries ago. Excellent museums abound, featuring works of renowned Flemish masters. Belgium's short North Sea coast has several popular resorts, and the Ardennes Forest claims some of the most beautiful scenery in Europe, with many hotels offering serenity and excellent cuisine.

Further Information

These titles are provided as a general indication of material published on this country. The Department of State does not endorse unofficial publications.

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Riley, Raymond. *Belgium.* Studies in Industrial Geography. Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1976.

Available from the Superintendent of Documents, U. S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402:

American University. *Area Handbook for Belgium, 1974.*

For information on economic trends, commercial development, production, trade regulations, and tariff rates, contact the International Trade Administration, U.S. Department of Commerce, Washington, D.C. 20230 or any Commerce Department district office.

struggled to maintain its accustomed high standard of living. Every sector suffered except the consumers, who until 1982 continued spending at the expense of industrial competitiveness and profits. Government deficits climbed, and the national debt shot up from 50% to 70% of GNP. The foreign exchange portion of the debt rose from 2% to 12% of GNP during that period.

In this context, Prime Minister Martens' center-right coalition government formulated an economic recovery program to promote export-led growth by enhancing the competitiveness of Belgium's export industries. The Belgian franc was devalued 8.5% within the European monetary system in February 1982. The government also severed the link between inflation and wages and reduced the burden of corporate income taxation. Incentives were introduced to stimulate risk capital investment.

In addition, steps were taken to reduce the rate of government expenditures below the anticipated growth of government revenues. A partial price freeze was instituted to allow the devaluation to boost trade and corporate profitability rather than to dissipate through inflation. Together with the corporate tax cuts and other incentives, the price freeze was meant to encourage investment and, ultimately, the creation of new employment. Meanwhile, the decoupling of wages from inflation would lower real personal income, depress consumption including imports, and begin to redistribute national income from households to the production sector.

In 1983, the economic austerity program began to show progress, particularly in the export-oriented manufacturing sector. In 1984, industrial activity gained further momentum and exceeded an annual growth rate of 5%. Production in the steel and metalworking industry increased due to greater investments. The expansion of high-tech industry, particularly in Flanders, and the service sector continued at a steady pace. Residential construction also picked up owing to the running out of preferential value-added tax rates on construction. Real growth in GNP was approximately 2%, and by 1985, the government expects a surplus in both its trade and current accounts.

However, despite significant progress in those areas of the economy, conditions for the consumer have not changed dramatically. Average real wages have declined about 12% since 1982, and consumption is 1% below the level for that year. Unemployment leveled off in 1984 at 12.3%, but slight increases are expected before it begins to decline again. While conditions have not started to better for the average worker personally, there exists widespread acceptance that the austerity program will lead to better economic health as economic activity picks up during the rest of the decade.

Because about 75% of Belgium's trade is with its fellow European Communities (EC) countries, the Belgian economy is closely related to their economic performance. Belgium is seeking to diversify, expand, and consolidate trade relations with nontraditional trading partners, particularly with the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and China.

Foreign investment played an important part in Belgian economic growth in the 1960s. The Belgian Government encourages new investment from abroad as a means to promote employment. While new U.S. investment has declined in recent years, the total U.S. direct investment of 904 American companies operating in Belgium is estimated at $5.15 billion. The American Chamber of Commerce has calculated that U.S. companies provide about 1 of each 11 jobs in Belgium. Because of their strong export orientation, these jobs have been more resilient in the economic crisis than has employment geared to the domestic market.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

The Concert of Nations sanctioned the creation of Belgium in 1830 on the condition that the country remain strictly neutral. Before each of the World Wars, Belgium tried to follow a policy of neutrality. Recognizing the need for a better means of preserving its independence, however, Belgium was among the founding members of the Atlantic alliance in 1949.

In 1945, abandoning its twice unsuccessful policy of neutrality, Belgium became one of 12 founding members of NATO in 1949. Brussels became the host city for NATO Headquarters when NATO left Paris in 1966. Brussels is also host to the administrative body of the EC and has become a magnet for many other international organizations and for many regional corporation headquarters of U.S.-based firms.

Belgium continues to be a strong proponent of NATO and of close cooperation with the United States within the alliance. At the same time, the Belgians, cognizant of their country's small size, advocate strengthening the economic and political integration of the European Communities. They see the country's political and economic welfare as being founded on the Atlantic alliance and on enhanced European unity.

Belgium seeks improved East-West relations through such means as the mutual and balanced force reductions and by further implementing the goals agreed to in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Belgium also strongly supports the United Nations.

U.S.-BELGIAN RELATIONS

The excellent relations between the United States and Belgium are based on a similarity of outlook and a common dedication to the security of the free world. Good will toward Americans continues as a result of the U.S. role during and after the two World Wars.

Belgium works closely with the United States bilaterally and multilaterally to further liberalize trade, economic and political cooperation, and assistance to developing countries.

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Deputy Chief of Mission—
Ronald E. Woods
Political Counselor—William H. Marsh
Economic Counselor—
Lange Schemerhorn
Commercial Counselor—
Hendrik N. Smit
Administrative Counselor—
Earl W. Bellinger
Public Affairs Counselor (USIA)—
Christopher Snow
Defense Attache—William P. O'Bryan
Agricultural Attache—Roger S. Lowen
Director, Office of Federal Aviation
Administration—Phillip M. Swatek
Consular Officer—Mildred Patterson
Consul General, Antwerp— George
Rueckert
Permanent Representative to the U.S.
Mission to NATO (USNATO)—
Amb. David M. Abshire
Deputy Permanent Representative and
Deputy Chief of Mission, USNATO—
Stephen J. Ledogar
Ambassador to the U.S. Mission to the
EC (USEC)—William Middendorf
Deputy Chief of Mission, USEC—Robert
Brungart

The U.S. Embassy in Belgium is located at 27 Boulevard du Regent, 1000 Brussels (tel. 513-38-30). The U.S. Consulate General in Antwerp is located at Nationalestraat 5 (tel. 03-2321800); the European Logistical Support Office (ELSO), at Noorderlaan 147, 2030 Antwerp (tel. 03-5424775).

The U.S. Mission to NATO is at NATO Headquarters, on the Autoroute de Zaventem, 1110 Brussels (tel. 241-44-00). The U.S. Mission to the EC is located at 40 Boulevard du Regent, 1000 Brussels (tel. 513-44-50).

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